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18 December 1955

Can
The Honorable Nelson A. Rockefeller
Special Assistant to the President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Nelson:

Thank you for your letter of December 9th, forwarding a memorandum from Congressman Kersten. We have studied his proposals and agree that there might be considerable to be gained from the proposed joint statement by the 150 students of different nationalities and religions who are scheduled to meet in East Lansing. Inasmuch as this would be an operation wholly within the United States, however, CIA is not the appropriate Agency to handle it. *1/11/56*

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With best regards,

Sincerely,

SIGNED

Allen W. Dulles
Director

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16 December 1955

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SECRET

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via Reading

White House

Executive Registry

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Special Assistant to the President
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Dear Nelson:

Thank you for your letter of December 9th, forwarding a memorandum from Congressman Kersten. We have studied his proposals and agree that there might be considerable to be gained from the proposed joint statement by the 150 students of different nationalities and religions who are scheduled to meet in East Lansing. Inasmuch as this would be an operation wholly within the United States, however, we hardly think that CIA is the appropriate agency to handle it.

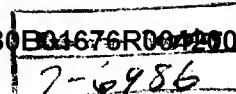
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With best regards,

Sincerely,

Allen W. Dulles
Director

A/DDP/P:KROOSEVELT:ag
16 December 1955



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

December 9, 1955

Dear Allen:

The attached memorandum from Congressman Kersten contains a rather interesting proposal. If it were to be followed, it would seem to me that it should come under your guidance.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

Nelson A. Rockefeller
Special Assistant

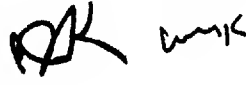
Honorable Allen W. Dulles
Director
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington 25, D.C.

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Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : The Honorable Nelson A. Rockefeller

DATE: December 2, 1955

FROM : Charles J. Kersten 

SUBJECT: Atheist Aggression and the Middle East

1. From the Middle East has sprung the world's great religions: Jewish, Christian, Moslem.

2. The antagonisms of the Middle East have usually involved some form of religious conflict among these deeply held Faiths. These antagonisms are at the root of the current crisis in the Middle East being skillfully exploited by the USSR.

3. While the differences have been bitter, of ancient origin and persistent, each of these Faiths is grounded in the belief in The Supreme Being.

4. For the first time in history these three Faiths are threatened by a Common Foe: Atheist Aggression, primary objectives of which are the destruction of all religion and the ultimate creation of a new race of beings "educated" into atheist materialism.

5. The land of the Jewish and Christian Sacred Scriptures, and of the Koran, is threatened with Marxism-Leninism. Jewish, Christian and Moslem shrines in Jerusalem, Nazareth, Bethlehem, Mecca, and Medina will not last long in Communist hands. The Wailing Wall that holds memories of the Temple of Solomon, the Shrine of the Holy Sepulchre, enclosing Calvary and the Tomb of Christ, the Dome of the Rock where Mohamet walked, will be subjected to the "exposures" of scientific materialism.

6. There is a unique confluence of the religious forces of Jewish, Christian and Moslem Faiths in the Middle East which, when communist deception is unmasked and its true purposes disclosed, should respond vigorously to the challenge of Atheism Aggression. Never before have these religious forces had such reason to stand together. The basic antagonism of Judeo-Christianity to Communism is well known. Communism is also an enemy of Islam (see Exhibit A).

7. Many leaders of the modern world pay lip service to religion and morality but act from motives of expediency. But ordinary peoples of every race are moved much more by sincere religious motives than is commonly understood. Ordinary people constitute the vast majority and in them resides the ultimate political power--and, because of their personal familiarity with pain and hardship they are spontaneously close to God.

- 2 -

8. This coming Christmas season there will be a good will gathering at East Lansing, Michigan under the sponsorship of Michigan State University of a hundred fifty foreign students from thirty-five nations and of the world's principle religions, including the great religions referred to above (see Exhibit B, article in December READER'S DIGEST, "Christmas Windows on a Wider World").

9. I have already made indirect contact with the authorities of Michigan State University through the Reverend Gilbert V. Hartke of Catholic University with a view toward making preliminary inquiry at Michigan State about the possibility of students of Jewish, Moslem, Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox faiths being encouraged, during their Christmas gathering, to make a joint expression of their common belief in a Supreme Being and a reference to the deadly threat of their common foe, Aggressive Atheism, in such places as the Middle East and elsewhere.

10. Father Hartke and I talked with Max Rabb of the White House about the Michigan State project. Mr. Rabb indicated his enthusiastic support of the idea and promised to mobilize publicity if such student action comes about.

11. With the stimulus of such student action at East Lansing, similar action could shortly thereafter be inspired among students of other countries (Canada, England and on the European continent).

12. Finally, such snowballing student action could be the catalytic agent for the calling of a conference of religious leaders in the Middle East in the very near future to take a formal common stand against the threat of Atheist Aggression.

13. Any such activity, either among the students or religious leaders, should be largely spontaneous. No attempt should be made to "set up" such a group or use it for political purposes. Such religious leaders should not be political personalities, but truly religious leaders. There is adequate cause for their common action against the spread of Atheist Materialism.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Father Hartke and I, and possibly one other, take a trip to East Lansing as soon as possible to explore the possibility of encouraging the student action referred to above and that expenses be provided for such a trip.

2. Following this, that a plan be developed within a short period of time for a trip to Europe and the Middle East to see what can be done to facilitate a gathering of religious leaders for the purposes above described.

Att.

Exh. A - Notes

Exh. B - READER'S DIGEST article (2 cys)

AFRO-ASIAN CONFERENCE

NOTES ON COMMUNIST PERSECUTION OF RELIGION IN ASIA
Vs. MOHAMMEDANISM

1. (1) Belief in Communism a Sin

CHERIBON (very near Bandung), Indonesia, Nov. 2, 1954-- Indonesian Moslem leaders have dealt a heavy blow against Communism in their country. They have declared it a sin for any Moslem to believe in Communism.

This far-reaching pronouncement was made by clerical leaders of the Masjumi Party's West Java branch. Masjumi is Indonesia's huge Moslem political party, believed to be the country's largest. It aims at making the country officially Moslem. The West Java branch is the party's largest affiliate.

Masjumi's clerical leaders, who met here recently to study Communism, found it strictly forbidden for Moslems. They declared that it runs counter to Islamic teaching and endangers the Indonesian Republic and the nation's religious life.

(2) "Communism Anti-religious"

In an article in the Indonesian-language weekly "Hikimah" on July 24, Yusef Wibisono, a former Finance Minister, who went to Moscow in 1951 as a member of the Indonesian "goodwill mission," warned Indonesian Moslems that Communism was anti-religious and anti-democratic, and its ideals were "entirely different from those of Islam." Communism aimed at establishing a totalitarian or police state, with dictatorial powers for the rulers, and the suppression of religion.

Wibisono went on: "Anyone who has ever studied Communism, even superficially is at once aware that the teachings of Marx and Lenin are anti-religious. The famous Marxist-Leninist axiom calls religion the 'opium of the people'; therefore, they say, religion must be wiped from the face of the earth. What I have said can be verified by what is taking place in Communist countries today. . . .

"The Communists, of course, often say that they respect religion. And those of our co-religionists who have been deceived by this talk are apt to observe that both in the Soviet Union and in the Republic of China there are millions of Moslems. They say this proves that Communist States respect religion.

- 2 -

But, Wibisono pointed out, the fact that in the Soviet Union there are about 25 million Moslems, and in the Republic of China about 60 million, "does not prove that the Communists love and respect religion, but only that they are unable to destroy it."

2. Ayatullah Al-Kashani, Persian Muslim leader.

According to Warta, the Malay language weekly published in Singapore, September 1, 1953, stated: "No Muslim can be a Communist. . . the bitterest enemy of Islam is Communism and the teachings of Islam are in utter contrast to those of Communism." and many other similar strong statements.

3. Mohammed Ismail Sahib, leader of the South Indian Muslim League and President of the Indian Union Muslim League.

According to Warta (January 12, 1954) said "Communism is the enemy of Islam, for it denies the existence of God".

4. Janabn Mohamed Ismail Sahib, an Indian Member of Parliament and leader of Muslim Educational Mission.

Said at press conference in Penang, August 5, 1953, "Communism denies the existence of God. Communism had advocated violence and, in countries where it has been temporarily successful, it has destroyed family life without regard for human spiritual values. . . thus it is the greatest menace the world is facing today."

Also quoted Marx's dicta, "religion is the opium of the people" and "religion must be destroyed at any cost if Communism is to succeed".

5. Sheikh Mohamed Makhlouf, the Grand Mufti of Egypt.

Stated, according to Arab News Agency, August 11, 1953: "Russia--old and new--has always been hostile to Muslims and Islam". Strongly denouncing "Communist atheism", he said that Muslims and Christians "have been submitted in Communist Russia to murder, exile to Siberia, confiscation of their property and denial of their freedom of worship". He added the warning that "Communist legal system makes men and women mere machines with no freedom of will. Those who aspire to freedom are severely punished".

- 3 -

5. Hassan al Hodoibi, Supreme Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.

Declared that Islam was the strongest bulwark against Communist ideology. According to the Cairo nationalist newspaper "Al-Misri", August 18, 1953, he declared that Communism was opposed to all religion and contradicted the fundamentals of Islam and undermined its moral and social systems.

7. Mochtar Gazali, Member of the Executive Council of the Federation of Indonesian Muslim Labor.

In the March 6, 1953 edition of Pedoman, Indonesian newspaper published in Djakarta, described the conditions under which Muslims live in Communist China, having spent three months there. Mr. Gazali told the story of a mother who, in the presence of her son, criticized the Communist regime. The son immediately reported her to the authorities. Not long afterwards the mother died. He stated, "This is the real mentality of the Communists. About twenty million Muslims have been badly treated in China and Russia." He added that 150,000 had fled from China to escape coercion. "There is a big mosque in China. There are religious books and a holy Koran. But, besides these books, there is a book called 'Das Kapital' in which it is written that 'religion is the opium of the people.'"

8. The following news dispatch from the South China Morning Post, March 3, 1953:

WASHINGTON, March 2--The Communist authorities are conducting a ruthless purge among the estimated 45,000,000 Moslems living inside Red China, reliable reports from the Far East revealed today.

Information received here reveals that the anti-Moslem programme is being conducted primarily in China's north-west province of Sinkiang which borders the Soviet Union. Its population of 4,000,000 is about 95 per cent Moslem.

Documents smuggled out of China and supported by non-Communist observers report that the Communists are turning mosques into museums, business offices and quarters for prisoners sent to this remote area as forced labourers.

- 4 -

Farmers, merchants and other Moslem holders of property are being rounded up and stripped of their possessions.

Russian officers are reported to be in command of a 60,000 man army, and other Soviets control the mineral resources, the newly created collective farms and other enterprises.

During recent months the purge has run into stiff but futile resistance, according to the reports. In Western Sinkiang, 134 Moslems were said to have been arrested for resisting land seizures. Many of these were sentenced to forced labour and others were executed.

Since last October evidence shows that more than 5,000 merchants and shopkeepers have been sentenced to prison and deprived of their property.

Farmers and herdsmen have slaughtered their cattle rather than let them fall into Communist hands.

In addition to the obvious purpose of stamping out an important religious faith, the purge doubtless is designed to frighten other minority elements into supporting the Communist regime, experts said. The Moslems apparently have been selected as a primary target because they represent about one-tenth of China's 450,000,000 people.--United Press.

9. Only 18 Out of 30 Million Moslems in Russia Make Mecca Pilgrimage.

JEDDAH, Saudi Arabia, Sept. 29 (UP)--

A carefully chosen and indoctrinated 18-man Soviet delegation this year became the second group in over 30 years of Communist rule in Russia to be allowed to make the holy pilgrimage to Mecca.

The delegation announced to all who would listen that Soviet Moslems worship in perfect freedom, yet the very size of the group belied this statement. They said that Russia has 30,000,000 Moslems, enjoying "complete civil rights". They did not explain why only 18 of the 30,000,000 were allowed to make the pilgrimage, which is expected of all good Moslems at least once in their lives.

Exhibit B (cy 1)

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Christmas Windows on a Wider World



Condensed from The Rotarian

Karl Detzer

DOORS OF more than 100 farm and village homes scattered through a dozen Michigan counties will swing open this holiday season to about 150 foreign young men and women in a practical demonstration of the ancient Christian doctrine of good will toward men. The young people are students at some 50 American colleges and universities from coast to coast. Black, white, yellow and brown, they represent 35 or more nations and all the principal religions of the world. Singly or in pairs, they will move into a home for a few exciting days, not as guests but as temporary members of the family.

These strangers in a strange land will learn firsthand what Christmas means in the homes of plain Americans on village Main Streets and along snowy back-country roads.

*Michigan State University's
two-way project in international
good will*

They will go to church with their "adopted" families, call on the neighbors, discover the jingling thrill of sleigh rides, attend Grange and Farm Bureau programs, sing carols, eat pumpkin pie. They will wash dishes, milk cows, shovel snow; they will sit long at the supper table exchanging ideas and experiences; and on Christmas Eve they will help the children decorate the Christmas tree—all as part of the third "Christmas Adventure" organized and sponsored by Michigan State University at East Lansing.

The homes to which these students are assigned are chosen carefully, not for their modernity or

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comforts but because they are typical in our Christian democracy. No home in which there is a maid or other servant is considered. In each house must be father, mother and children. If grandparents also are present, so much the better. Each family must have some church affiliation, it does not matter which.

Families are instructed on what is expected of them. Most important, a family must not "make company" of its guests. If the family usually eats at an oilcloth-covered table in the kitchen, tablecloths are taboo. Aprons must be provided for visiting girls, overalls and galoshes for barnyard chores for each young man. The young people learn, by doing and sharing, just how an American family lives.

Equally important, the American families learn about the faraway homes, customs and problems of their visitors. The project opens farmhouse and village windows on a wider world, breaking down prejudices and misconceptions based on inexperience or isolation. Thus a white Baptist farmer may sit down to supper in his own kitchen one night with a Coptic native of Africa, the next night with a Japanese Buddhist or Bavarian Roman Catholic.

These holiday visits are part of a program, "Adventures in World Understanding," begun by Michigan State University shortly after World War II. Invitations go out in early fall to foreign-student advisers in all American colleges, who decide

the plan. No more than 12 natives of any one country are included in any one year. In this way more countries are represented. In recent "adventures," Thailanders, Indians, Chinese and Filipinos have made up almost a third of the list, with Germany, France, Egypt and Greece also heavily represented.

The ten days in Michigan cost \$85 per student, plus transportation to and from East Lansing. If a student can afford to pay his own expenses he is urged to do so. But for those who cannot, "scholarships" are available, financed by contributions from Michigan industries, unions, service clubs, church groups and individuals.

The young men and women meet on the East Lansing campus about December 22, and are briefed on what to expect. A student volunteer from Michigan State is assigned as trip "host" or "hostess" for each group of ten, assisting them as they move from home to home and community to community. These American students pay their own way, give up holidays at home.

The visitors often provide small communities with their first experience with natives of other lands. Usually the Farm Bureau, the local PTA or service club serves as coordinator, plans special entertainment. The visit often ends with a community pot-luck supper in school or Grange hall, and each visiting student is called on to speak. Nearly always the students are invited back

vite themselves, and turn up ready to give a hand in driving the tractor, filling the woodbox or helping with the dishes. Most of these friendships endure through letters after the student returns home.

As one drops in on communities with past experiences in entertaining foreign visitors—towns like Sherman, New Era, Ludington, Manistee, Kaleva—families get out treasured letters bearing exotic stamps, and proudly read aloud the latest news from equally obscure communities in Brazil, Iran, the Gold Coast, Pakistan or Greece. A doctor, several teachers, a retired Pullman porter, a grocer, a village editor, a machinist's wife, a judge and many farmers talked enthusiastically to me about how these visits had opened wider understanding of the world.

One day last spring Mrs. Bill Hasenbank, who lives on a farm near tiny Freesoil, Mich., glanced at the foreign stamp on a letter just delivered, and hurried to call her husband from the barn. "Another letter from Ishwa!" she exclaimed.

"Ishwa" is Ishwarbhai A. Petal, a Hindu from Chikhodra, India. A student of chemistry at Michigan State in 1952-53, he had been the Hasenbanks' guest, had returned to the farm again and again, many times bringing other Hindus with him. When he left for home, "It was like saying good-by to one of our own," the Hasenbanks said to me.

The letter was full of pleasant chatter about the young chemist's
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family in India, but there were also passages about the economic situation and the difficulty of getting a job. That night the Hasenbank family sat around the supper table discussing Ishwa's—and India's—problems with rare understanding.

The visitors, whatever their religious belief—Buddhist, Islamic, Greek Orthodox—usually join their Protestant or Catholic hosts at Christmas church services. Afterward they often talk about religion.

"Strange religions are more like our own than we ever suspected," the wife of a village mechanic said to me. "We are Congregationalists. The Buddhists and Moslems who have stayed with us have their own holy books, but we all seem to agree with each other about what is good and what is bad."

The person who thus opens his home does not know until the student arrives the nationality, color or creed of his guest. Several times Jewish hosts have found themselves giving shelter to Arabs. Introductions sometimes have been strained, but before the visits end Jew and Moslem have discovered that, despite long-fostered hatreds on Jordan's winding shore, they can find much to admire in each other.

At the village of Mesick a young Iraqi boy, after attending Sunday school, church, a Farm Bureau luncheon and a PTA program, was asked for his impressions.

"In the home where I stayed yesterday," he said, "I see the charming daughter of my host working at 5

p. m. in the barnyard. She wears overalls and boots. At eight o'clock this same night she appears in beautiful attire, with the lipstick and cosmetic. She is beautiful. And she is hostess for a large party of young people. I know now what democracy means."

After a few days on the farms and in small towns, buses pick up the visitors and carry them back to the campus. From there, following another briefing, they set out again, this time to discover something about Americans in industry. In the Detroit area they visit manufacturing plants and automobile assembly lines. They are entertained at lunches given by management and by labor unions. Each student goes home to dinner one evening with a company executive, another with a plant worker. After the students return to the University, a series of discussions stresses the accord between American management and labor and the fact that, despite flare-ups and strikes, both sides try to seek agreement by peaceful means.

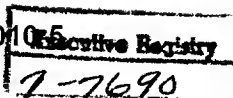
One Italian student was guest of a newspaper editor who introduced him up and down Main Street. On his last afternoon the student stood in the man's living room staring moodily out the window. "One thing you do not show me," he challenged at last. "You keep hidden the homes of the working class!"

"Take a look," the editor said. "In that house with the flower garden lives a man who works at a machine in the basket factory. Next door—and you see that the houses are about the same—lives the president of the bank. Just beyond is the Lutheran minister's home. The next house belongs to a rural mail carrier. To the left of our house lives the man who drives the village trash truck. On the other side is our probate judge."

The editor led the unbelieving young Italian up and down the block, introduced him to these neighbors. The lad saw that their houses, inside and out, were much alike, and that the trash collector and the judge drove cars of the same make and age. "That kid is not going to be a soft touch for Communist propaganda when he gets home," the editor says.

Some 750 students have taken part in the Michigan program since it started seven years ago. But there are more than 30,000 foreign students enrolled each year in American colleges and universities. And although many schools have similar programs, not nearly enough of these young people meet nearly enough Americans. If every student from abroad had the opportunity offered by Michigan State, international relationships would be on a far firmer foundation.

*Worry is like sand in an oyster: a little produces a pearl,
too much kills the animal.*



21 December 1955

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Record

SUBJECT: Atheist Aggression and the Middle East

The Director called Mr. Kersten on 21 December and advised him that:

1. While he was thoroughly in agreement with the proposal with respect to the goodwill gathering at Michigan State University, this was somewhat out of the purview of CIA since this particular operation is within the US;



Executive Assistant
to the Director

JSE:ekt (21 Dec 55)

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1 - JSE

CHARLES J. KERSTEN, WIS., CHAIRMAN

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, U. S.

COMMITTEE ON COMMUNIST AGGRESSION

WASHINGTON, D. C.

Executive Secretary

7-7219

PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL

December 15, 1955

Mr. Allen W. Dulles
Director
Central Intelligence Agency
2430 E Street, N.W.
Washington, D. C.

Dear Allen:

The Leningrad Museum of the History of Religion and Atheism opened three more departments this year: "The Origin of Religion"; "Religion in Ancient Egypt"; and "The History of Orthodoxy and Russian Atheism". They will open a new department in 1956: "Religion and Atheism in China and India".

Throughout our congressional hearings last year there was frequent confirmation of the widespread "scientific atheism" that permeates Education in the Soviet orbit.

I know you agree with me that atheism is the ideology which supports the communist system (without which it would break up) in direct conflict with our ideology expressed by the President at Philadelphia ("that man is created in the image of God"), and by the Secretary of State in Chicago last Thursday ("this nation has, from its earliest days, been influenced by religious ideals").

I am sure you will agree with me too, Allen, that never before has our, or any other civilization, been assaulted by such an avowed and dynamic atheist system and government intent upon remaking mankind to its materialist image.

I mention the above in connection with the paper recently forwarded from our office on Atheist Aggression and the Middle East. As time is running out on this, I wonder if I can have an opportunity to discuss it with you.

With best personal wishes,


Charles J. Kersten

Address:
Room 314
Executive Office Building

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Dulles

Attached is the correspondence
you will need when you call Congressman
Kersten.


JSE

19 December 1955

(DATE)

MEMORANDUM FOR: MR. DULLES

A copy of the attached has been
furnished Kermit Roosevelt.

JSE

16 Dec 55

(DATE)

FORM NO. 101 REPLACES FORM 10-101
1 AUG 54 WHICH MAY BE USED.

(47)